



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 9, 2007

## **FACT SHEET**

### **MAYOR URGES COUNCIL TO SUPPORT WAIVER REQUEST**

#### ***NO HARM TO OCEANS, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF SECONDARY TREATMENT AND AVOIDING MAJOR RATE INCREASES CITED IN SUPPORT OF WAIVER REQUEST***

Mayor Jerry Sanders is urging the City Council to join him in supporting a waiver of secondary treatment requirements for the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Mayor, who announced his support for a waiver last month, has now provided Council with a request for consideration and action on this important regional issue at a hearing later this month.

#### **SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE WAIVER REQUEST**

The Mayor's decision to seek a waiver is based on extensive environmental data now available to the City. In early October, an independent Scientific Technical Review Committee made up largely of scientists from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography released a well documented report concluding that the Treatment Plant does not have a detrimental impact on the ocean environment.

The Committee's experts found that San Diego is different than other locations with ocean outfalls in important ways. San Diego's outfall is the deepest in the United States. It is also one of the longest and is of a newer design that improves the dilution of the treated effluent it releases.

The Committee also found that San Diego's ocean currents and thermal layers keep the discharges deep and moving away from shore. The plant itself does a very good job of removing materials from the wastewater discharged by the City bringing the Point Loma facility very close to the secondary treatment levels some want to force the City to adopt.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF SECONDARY OUTWEIGHED BY IMPACTS**

In order to build a secondary treatment plant the City would have to carve into the coastal bluffs that the current facility is located on. The result of that action would be the movement of more than 1.2 million tons of earth, much of it located next to very sensitive habitats.

Achieving secondary treatment levels would remove an additional 2,740 tons of solid materials from the plant's discharge system every year. All of that tonnage would become biosolids eventually applied to the land.

Additionally, construction of secondary treatment facilities would turn the Pt. Loma plant – now an energy producer given its biogas power generation facilities – into one of the region's top 20 consumers of electricity. Generating the energy needed to power the plant, if secondary treatment technologies were installed, would produce over 100,000 tons of greenhouse gases – CO<sub>2</sub> – released to the atmosphere each year.

#### **WAIVER HELPS RATEPAYERS AVOID MAJOR INCREASES**

The \$1.5 billion cost for secondary treatment would be borne exclusively by ratepayers. Meeting those costs would entail a series of rate increases beginning in 2009. The rate increases for secondary treatment would be in addition to the sewer rate and water rate increases already approved by the City Council earlier this year. A waiver would eliminate the need for the new sewer rate increases to cover secondary treatment costs.

By 2012, the cumulative impact of all sewer rate increases would inflate a typical customer's sewer bill by close to 70%. This means the typical Single Family Residential customer who now pays \$38 a month for sewer service would pay close to \$64 each month within four years. These totals are in addition to the amount that would be due for water service.

#### **Rate Increases Required for Secondary Treatment:**

<i><b>2009</b></i>	<i><b>2010</b></i>	<i><b>2011</b></i>	<i><b>2012</b></i>
<i><b>9.00%</b></i>	<i><b>9.00%</b></i>	<i><b>4.00%</b></i>	<i><b>4.00%</b></i>

Any rate increase would be subject to the state mandated "Proposition 218" requirements that allow ratepayers to protest, and potentially deny, any rate increases proposed by the City.